

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

In this reply, Claims 1, 22, and 28 are amended. Claims 25-26 are canceled and no claims are added. Thus, Claims 1-24 and 28 are pending in the application. Each issue raised in the Office action mailed June 9, 2009 is addressed below.

I. ISSUES RELATING TO PRIOR ART

A. CLAIMS 1-4, 9-10, 12-16, 21, 24, AND 28 --- 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-4, 9-10, 12-16, 21, 24, and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Pat. Pub. 2001/0017700 (“Homma”) in view of U.S. Patent 6,631,247 (“Motoyama”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Current Claim 1 recites the following (emphasis added):

A multifunction peripheral configured to perform the steps of:
requesting first device-related information from a network device
over a network, wherein the first device-related information
includes meter-reading information;
receiving the first device-related information from the network device
over the network;
obtaining multifunction peripheral information, wherein the obtaining
multifunction peripheral information includes reading a meter
of the multifunction peripheral;
**generating a device-related report based at least in part on said
first device-related information and based at least in part
on the multifunction peripheral information; and**
**sending said device-related report to a recipient device, wherein
the recipient device is separate from both the network
device and the multifunction peripheral.**

Independent Claim 28 contains the same or a similar feature to the bolded feature in current Claim 1 above. The Examiner is respectfully requested to review the embodiment

of the invention illustrated in Fig. 1 for a fuller appreciation of the novel structure of Claims 1 and 28.

These independent claims particularly point out a multifunction peripheral in which the multifunction peripheral is configured to request information from other networked devices, generate a device-related report that includes both its own information and the requested information, and send the device-related report on to a separate recipient device. The claimed invention permits the serial passing of information up a chain of networked devices.

In contrast, the Examiner's suggestion to insert the multifunction peripheral of Homma into the "service device" of Motoyama would fail to meet the claim limitations and makes no sense, because the service device of Motoyama functions as an information terminal stopping at the service device. See Figure 5, in which information transmitted to service machine 254 resides in data (store) 256 and cannot be passed to other devices. See also service machine 502 in Figure 11.

Even if the multifunction peripheral of Homma were incorporated into the service device, there would be no ability, and no need, for the combination to request data from other networked devices, compile the data with its own data, and send the compiled data to a another device. The combination would serve as an information terminal, a final resting place for the data it receives.

Accordingly, even if the references were combined, the combination would fail to disclose or suggest at least one claimed feature in current Claims 1 and 28.

When taken together, Homma and Motoyama fail to disclose or suggest the three object configuration {multifunction peripheral, network device, recipient device} of

Applicants' claimed apparatus. Similarly, nothing in either Homma or Motoyama discloses or suggests Applicants' claimed apparatus in which a multifunction peripheral is used as an intermediary device in the generation and transmission of a device-related report to a recipient device.

Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejections based on the combination of Homma and Motoyama.

B. CLAIMS 5-8, 11, 17-20, 22-23, AND 25-26 --- 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5, 20, 22-23, and 25-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2002/0046247 ("Iwase").

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,725,300 ("Nagasaka").

Claims 7, 11, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,347,305 ("Watkins").

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Pat. Pub. 2004/0184108 ("Takano").

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of WO 01/40907 ("Carter").

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Homma, in view of Motoyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,347,306 (“Swart”).

Claims 25 and 26 have been canceled, rendering moot the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The remainder of these rejections are respectfully traversed. No combination of one or more of the following {Motoyama, Homma, Iwase, Nagasaka, Watkins, Takano, Carter, Swart} cures the defects identified with respect to current independent Claims 1 and 28 above. Accordingly, each of these claims is patentable at least for the reasons Claims 1 and 28 are patentable, and Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all claim rejections.

II. CONCLUSION

The pending claims not discussed so far are dependent claims that depend on an independent claim that is discussed above. Because each of the dependent claims include the limitations of claims upon which they depend, the dependent claims are patentable for at least those reasons the claims upon which the dependent claims depend are patentable. Removal of the rejections with respect to the dependent claims and allowance of the dependent claims is respectfully requested. In addition, the dependent claims introduce additional limitations that independently render them patentable. Due to the fundamental difference already identified, a separate discussion of those limitations is not included at this time.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable over the art of record, including the art cited but not applied.

Accordingly, allowance of all claims is hereby respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that such contact would further the examination of the present application.

A petition for extension of time, to the extent necessary to make this reply timely filed, is hereby made. If applicable, a law firm check for the petition for extension of time fee is enclosed herewith. If any applicable fee is missing or insufficient, throughout the pendency of this application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any applicable fees and to credit any overpayments to our Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

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